

Discussion Paper

Ministry of Education

05/79: SURVEY OF REHABILITATION
PROGRAMS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



Province of
British Columbia
Ministry of
Education



PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DISCUSSION PAPER

SURVEY OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMS
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

M. Csapo
Associate Professor
Special Education Department
University of British Columbia

and

J.A.G. Gittins
Director of Special Education
Special Programs Branch
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

The Special Programs Branch is interested in your comments on the matters raised in this previously unpublished report. On the back page you will find a convenient mail-in form, or you may respond by more detailed letter to the address given.

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M. Csapo

Special Education Department
University of British Columbia

and

J.A.G. Gittins

Director of Special Education
Special Programs Branch
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since a large percentage of these children had been described as emotionally disturbed and/or socially maladjusted children, it is recommended that the Mental Health Branch, Ministry of Health, be encouraged to join the Ministries of Education and Human Resources by participating in the Rehabilitation Programs by providing: funding, counselling, training, and crisis intervention.
2. Since a number of children in this program are described as delinquent the Ministry of the Attorney General is encouraged to participate actively with the other Ministries in the Rehabilitation Programs. Rehabilitation Programs might be viable options when considering diversion from the Court.
3. Expansion of services to youth on waiting list. While this survey did not establish whether multiple listings for the same person existed on various waiting lists the demand seems to be great for additional programs in many school districts. It is recommended that present programs be expanded to accommodate these pupils or additional programs be established where the waiting lists warrants it.
4. Strengthening and increasing the understanding and cooperation between parents, home, school, and Rehabilitation Programs. The reported lack of understanding of program objectives and techniques indicates the need for opportunities for close communication and involvement. It is recommended that superintendents, principals of home schools and program directors seek opportunities to enhance the communication and cooperation. Exchange of ideas on management techniques, expectation, methods of teaching.

5. Local support team of personnel from Education, Human Resources, Health and Corrections be made available to these programs. That the supervisor or coordinator of special education be a member of this team.
 6. Budgetary difficulties be reviewed with school administration.
 7. That Grade 11 work be made available to pupils who show promise of reintegration by Grade 12.
 8. Each program be evaluated yearly and revise its program according to findings.
 9. That children who are at risk in the early grades be given effective special education or learning assistance services including periodic reviews of program effectiveness to insure satisfactory progress and thus prevent failure and dropping out at the early years in secondary school.
 10. That secondary schools diversify teaching techniques, methods of delivery and organization of programs to accommodate the child whose skills do not enable him to handle the Grade 8 program and the independent learning required. Intensive remediation to precede Grade 8 instruction to take place where need is indicated.
- That the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the other Ministries provide opportunity for in-service education of personnel.

Introduction

The delivery of educational services to students unable to meet the expectations of the regular secondary school program, via Rehabilitation Programs, is a recent development in British Columbia. The "Junior Vocational Class" established following the recommendations of the Chant Report (1960), also known as the "Occupational Class" was the only alternative form of education at the secondary level for two decades. Alternative programs to schools for youths, labeled delinquent, pre-delinquent, emotionally disturbed and/or socially maladjusted, were provided by a small number of facilities sponsored by the Departments of Health, Human Resources and Corrections. A few of these programs have an experimental educational component often supported by local school boards.

Following the decision to provide services for children in their own communities rather than in provincial catchment facilities (e.g. Willingdon, Brannan Lake and The Maples), a number of educational programs designed to provide services for youths with social and/or emotional problems and began on an experimental basis. These programs, called Rehabilitation Programs, conceived by concerned educators, psychologists, probation officers, social workers, child care workers and initially operated independently, supported often by short term funding from various local, provincial and federal sources. In many cases their precarious existence ended abruptly with the termination of funding.

The "Education for All Children" Conference in 1974 (Csapo and Poutt, 1974) made reference to the existence of 42 Rehabilitation Programs. The survey conducted by Walsh (1974) identified 715 students between the ages of 12 to 16 who were involved in Rehabilitation Programs. Half of these students were described as serious behavior problems. Forty-eight percent were on probation "with a long history of failure and low self-image." This report stated explicitly that the Rehabilitation Programs were the only programs in the province financed by joint funding. Furthermore the need for specific objectives for the individual programs and for a method of evaluating the achievement of these objectives as well as the need for regionally organized in-service for the staffs involved was indicated.

The apparent success and the existence of these programs identified unmet educational needs. A number of these Rehabilitation Programs owed their initial existence to federal funds provided by Local Initiative Program (LIP) grants. The then Minister of Education, prevented the proliferation of Rehabilitation Programs outside the public school system, by curtailing the use of federal funds for classroom instruction or teaching assistance. Local School Boards were encouraged to include adequate funds for the efficient operation of the schools in their budgets and to advise the Ministry of continuing needs of their districts, including alternative programs funded by other agencies. This directive caused school districts to assume responsibility for all Rehabilitation Programs. The joint funding of Rehabilitation Programs (Department of Human Resources, Serial Letter No. 555 - 549, 1975) by the Departments of Education and Human Resources materialized.

Rehabilitation Programs were acknowledged as programs "for young people who were experiencing great difficulty at school or who had dropped out of school". The Attorney General's Department provided limited funding for a small number of Rehabilitation Programs for youth on probation in cooperation with the local school boards.

The Guidelines - Special Education Programs 1977-78 of the British Columbia Ministry of Education describe Rehabilitation Programs - Secondary under heading 302: "These programs enable young people who are experiencing great difficulty at school or who have dropped out of school to acquire basic academic and social skills. These programs should make it possible for them to re-enter the school system and proceed to further education, training or employment.

- 302.1 Educational and behavioral objectives must be outlined for each program and for each individual student in a program.
- 302.2. Although these programs normally cover the age range 12 - 18, primary emphasis will be focussed on students aged 12 - 16.
- 302.3 The Ministry of Human Resources participation will usually take the form of salaries for Child Care Workers.
- 302.4 Child Care Workers should provide services of a social service nature. These workers are to be used as teacher aides in a para-educator role.

The number of Rehabilitation Programs increased significantly between 1973 and 1978.

A survey was conducted in the spring of 1978 with the purpose of gathering and updating information about the Rehabilitation Programs in the Province of British Columbia. The completed returns (91%)

identified 105 of such programs of instruction at the Junior High and Secondary School level, ranging from 1 program to 15 programs per district. One program (1%) described a Rehabilitation Program at the elementary school level and consequently it was not included in this report. Six school districts (8%) have not established Rehabilitation Programs.

1. Program Characteristics:

i) Length of Programs

The majority of the programs 84 (80%) were launched between 1974 and 1977. Only 21 (20%) of the programs existed prior to 1974. Fifteen (14%) of these programs began during the 1972 - 1973 school year.

ii) Program Schedule

The majority, 80 (76%) of the programs operated Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Two residential programs offered services 24 hours a day for 7 days a week. All others operated programs Monday through Friday with starting times from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and closing times from 3:15 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The longest daily session was 9 hours. Four programs (4%) offered crisis counselling in the evenings and at weekends. Fourteen programs (13%) listed additional weekend involvement including camping, field trips and work experience.

iii) The location of Rehabilitation Programs are shown on the following page in Figure 1.

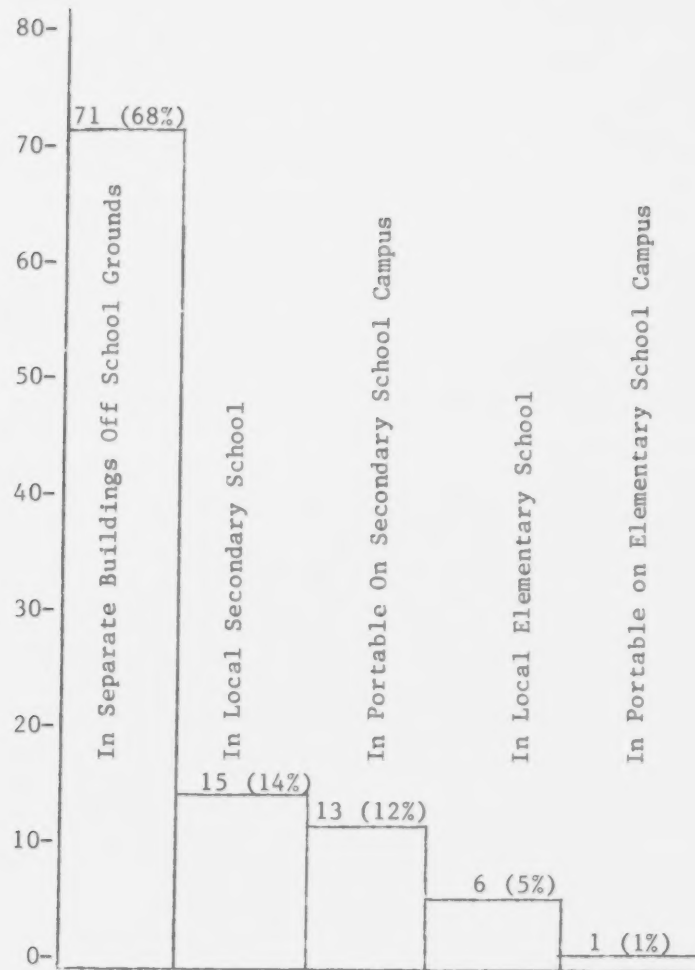


Figure 1. Distribution of programs
by location

Nineteen (27%) of the 71 (68%) programs, housed in separate buildings, described their location as: vacant rural schools, old district offices, former teacherages, Boys Clubs, rented space in churches, residential receiving homes, trailers, old hospitals, church basements, houses owned by school boards. In addition, 93 (89%) programs utilized premises or space other than the ones designated as the school, to carry out special

features of the program, such as gymnasiums, log cabins, libraries, private apartments, district resource centres, shops, the community local parks, garages, houses of staff and students, summer camps, community colleges, place of employment, camping sites and wilderness locations.

Facilities in the regular school building were used for physical education, industrial education and home economics by 26 (25%) of the programs.

iv) Student enrolment, size of programs, and number of students on waiting lists

The total number of students enrolled in these programs as of December 31, 1977, was 1,962. The age range of students varied from 12 to 20 years: 46 (44%) of the programs accepted students of 13 years of age; 18 (17%) stated their age range as 13 - 17 years; and 13 (12%) as 14 - 17 years.

The smallest student enrolment per program was 4, the largest 96.

Figure 2 illustrates size of student enrolment.

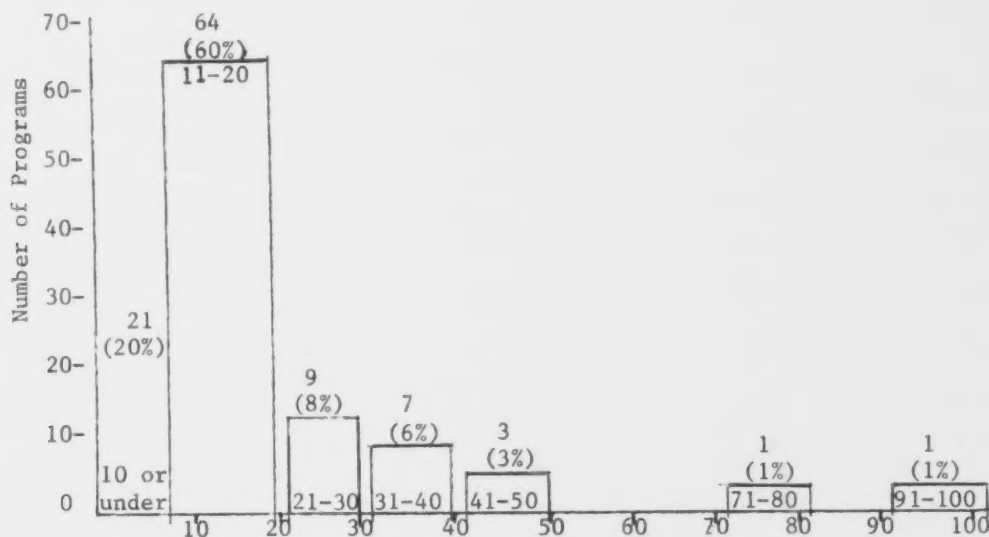


Figure 2. Size of student enrolment per program
The smallest program was originally designed for 6 students, the largest for 96.

Figure 3 shows the number of students as per original program proposal.

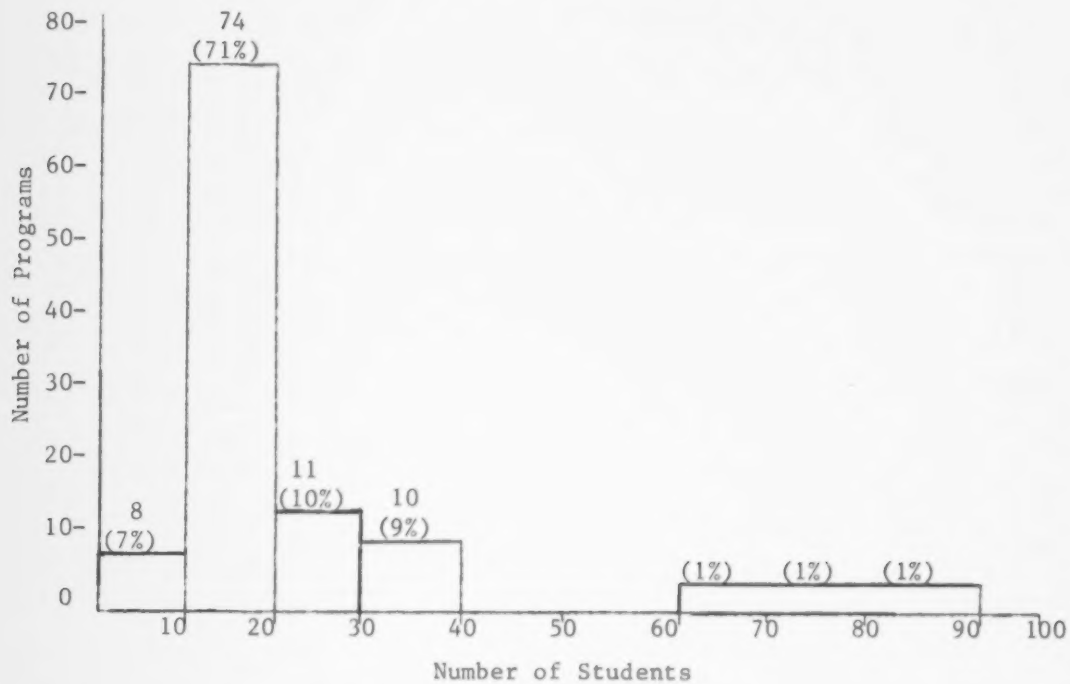


Figure 3. Number of students per original proposal.

At the time of the survey, 16 (15%) programs enrolled a larger number of students and 14 (13%) programs a smaller number of students than the number proposed in the original design.

As of December 31, 1977, 75 (72%) of the programs had waiting lists which included 908 children. The number of prospective students ranged from nil to 180 per program. Six (6%) of the programs had waiting lists larger than the number of students their program was originally designed for.

v) Philosophy of the program

The underlying program philosophy, expressed in a variety of

ways, stressed the right of the individual to education, regardless of behaviors, problems and/or attitudes. To quote:

- a) "The philosophy of the program is based on the belief that the school should provide an environment in which the abilities and talents of the students will develop in a manner that will foster the growth of their own positive self-concept."
- b) "Generally, the purpose of the program is to rehabilitate adolescents identified as being unable to function successfully in the regular school programs. The staff of the program see the client as an individual and supply remediation, socialization and career education to that particular client's needs. It is the hope of the program that the client will successfully acquire academic, vocational and social survival skills, and either be able to re-integrate into a regular academic program in school, or be successful on the job market. All students are to acquire social survival skills."
- c) "Some children cannot cope, either academically, socially, or emotionally, with the regular school system (b) that these children have a

right to an education that meets their special needs (c) that the 'system' has the responsibility to provide an alternative type of education for these 'un-average' children and (d) that in a warmer, more casual and more intimate environment the school staff can encourage and elicit behavior and attitude changes that will allow the children in our program to better cope with themselves, school, their peers, their parents and the community, and offer them more life choices. Those students, who for one reason or another cannot cope with the regular secondary setting, deserve more than to be 'left on the streets'. If they demonstrate a desire to reach a vocational and/or academic goal the public education system should respond to their needs."

vi) Program objectives

The majority of the programs 93 (89%) listed five main program objectives.

- academic upgrading in basic skill areas	94 (90%)
- transition to employment	63 (60%)
- social skill training	52 (50%)
- re-entry to regular school	52 (50%)
- improvement of self-concept	48 (46%)

Work experience and counselling were also mentioned as program objectives.

vii) Time allocation

Figures 4 through 7 will show percentage of time allocated for program objectives.

a) Academic upgrading

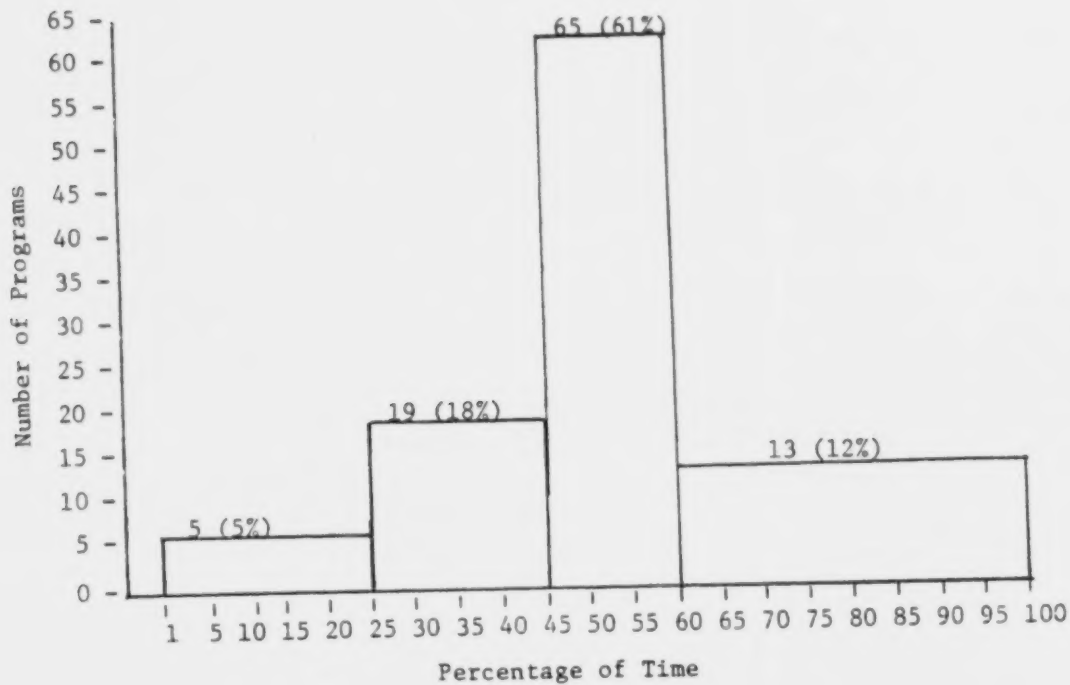


Figure 4. Percentage of time allocated on academic upgrading. Approximately two-thirds, 72 (69%) of the programs responded that more than 50% of their program time was allocated to academic upgrading.

* These percentages shown do not add up to 100 because the respondents cited more than one mutually non-exclusive item. This will reoccur in a number of multiple categories in this report and will be indicated by an asterisk.

b) Social skill training

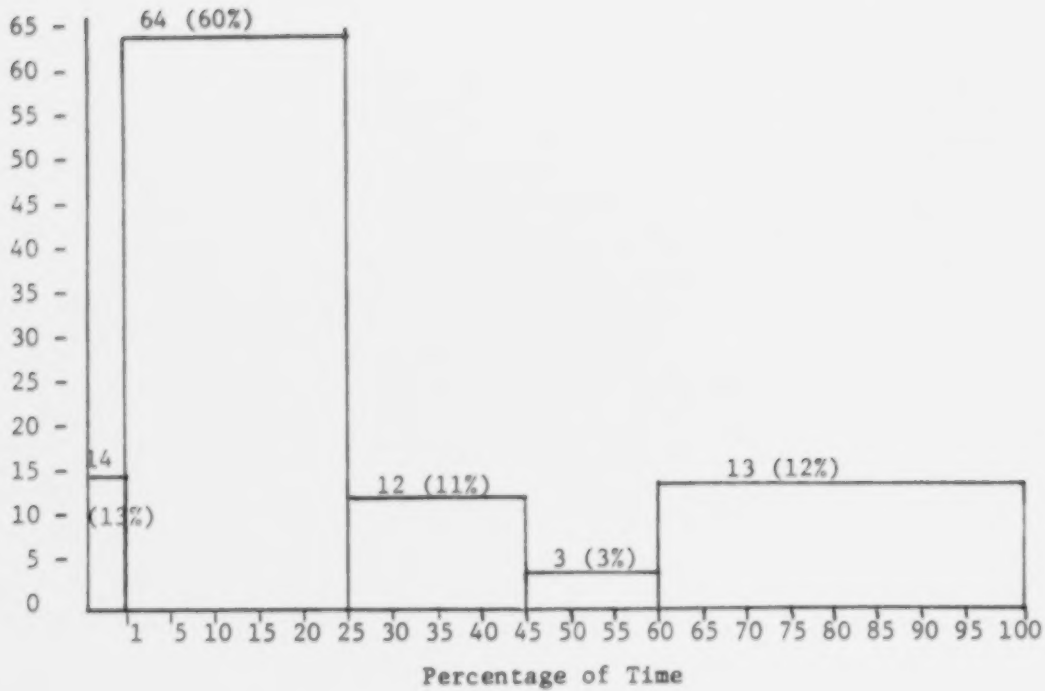


Figure 5. Percentage of time allocated for social skill training.

Almost three-fourth 77 (73%) of the programs allocated less than 25% of their program time to social skill training.

c) Vocational training

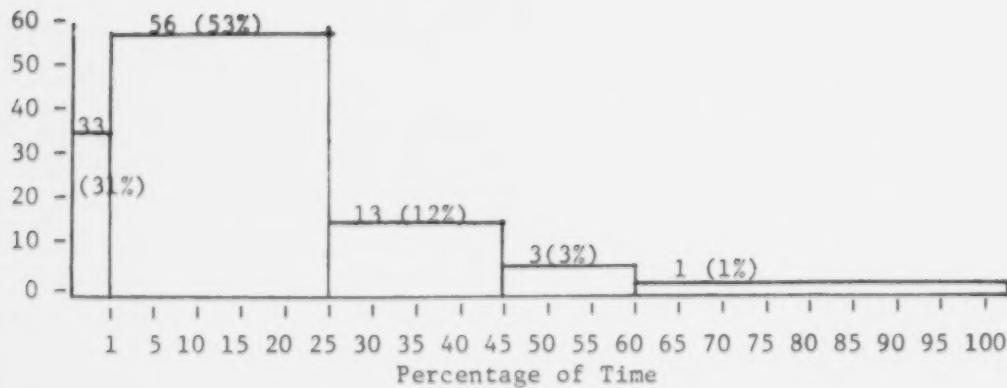


Figure 6. Percentage of program time allocated to vocational training.

The majority of the programs 88 (84%) spent less than 25% of the program time on vocational training. For 45 (43%) of the programs vocational training meant work experience. Industrial education, home economics, career education were also included in this category. Other vocational activities were: tree planting, catering, carpentry, construction jobs, painting, cutting wood, cordwood and fence posts cutting, typing and business machines, vocational counselling, writing job resumes, and some students holding regular jobs.

d) Recreational activities

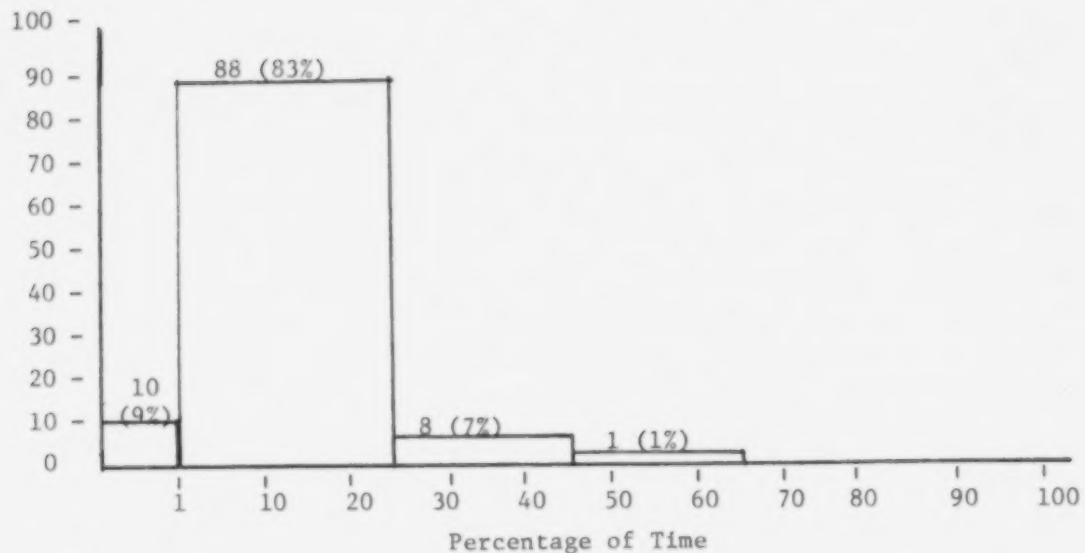


Figure 7. Percentage of time allocated for recreational activities.

In addition, some programs indicated that 5%-25% of the program time was scheduled for arts and crafts; 20% for wilderness training; 20% of the time for integration into the regular

program; 45% for Physical Education, Industrial Education and Home Economics; 26% for Native Studies and Culture; 15% for Life Sciences; 10 % for group process activities and 30% for counselling.

viii) Criteria for admission

The criteria for admission emphasized age and sex as common factors. Referral by the school counsellor, Ministry of Human Resources and the Family Court was central to the admittance procedure for the majority of the programs. Common components of admission criteria describing student characteristics were given as:

- socially, emotionally and behaviorally disturbed:	71 (69%)
- difficulty with regular program:	68 (66%)
- willingness to attend:	35 (33%)
- dropout or potential dropout:	25 (24%)
- delinquent:	12 (11%)
- Native Indian:	4 (4%)*

In addition the following criteria were cited as reason for admission: no other program being available or willing to accept students, being "excused" from all other programs: learning disability; average ability; previous history of special education; having only a grade 5 reading level; resident in group home; and being resident in a particular area.

Some programs indicated that they do not consider pupils who are mentally retarded, physically handicapped or pupils with serious emotional or psychiatric disturbances.

ix) Changes in admission criteria and program objectives

Over their short life span, 40 (38%) programs changed their criteria of admission. These changes mainly involved age, sex, system of referral and student characteristics.

In a number of programs specialization occurred, over time and they accept, only dropouts and/or drug related problems or delinquents or potential dropouts. Some programs lowered and others raised age requirements. The original self-referral procedures often through school counsellors, probation officers or the local office of the Ministry of Human Resources. Some programs no longer even accept low ability students. Others became school based with a more formalized and structured admission policy. In general, programs which originally admitted boys or girls only, now enroll both sexes.

Initial program objectives were modified by 72 (68%) of the programs. These changes involved: additional emphasis on core subjects, channeling students toward re-entry, realignment of academic requirements, greater or lesser emphasis on academic work and integration into the regular secondary program, increased emphasis on alternative to re-entry, such as employment or further education.

Many vague objectives have become more specific. Simultaneously, some programs concluded that the staff were unable to deal with such a wide variety of problems and some students were excused.

x) Budget

These programs were funded by the local school district and

the Ministry of Education. The salaries of child care workers and other program costs were furnished by the Ministry of Human Resources via private societies. Correction workers were financed by the Ministry of the Attorney-General. These budgets were further supplemented by funds from: student fund-raising, Boys Clubs, Community Service Clubs, and work projects. Difficulties in budgeting were pinpointed as including insufficient funds for transportation and recreation, inadequate staffing, need for lunch program, staff to coordinate work experience, insufficient art supplies, and requirement for vehicles for transportation. Twenty-eight 28 (27%) of the programs considered the funding arrangements adequate.

xi) Administration

Administratively each Rehabilitation Program is assigned to a principal, the names of the students appear on the register of a local secondary or junior high school and they generate funds as part of the Basic Instructional Program.

Rehabilitation class teachers were asked to review the advantages and disadvantages of having a program administratively attached to a secondary school.

a) The advantages of being administratively attached to a secondary school were listed as:

- access to material, personnel resources and
secretarial help-----75 (71%)
- opportunity for integration-----20 (19%)
- gives the program credibility and
recognition-----11 (10%)

Availability of peer group for socialization, access to extra-curricular activities, sports, dances, opportunity for greater rapport with staff, maintenance of contact with the ongoing program, assistance in administrative matters were identified as additional advantages.

Four (4%) programs only could not describe any advantage in being administratively attached to a secondary school.

b) Disadvantages of being administratively attached to a secondary school were cited as follows:

- "Authority of the principal overrides decisions made by the Rehabilitation class."
- "Labeling by other students and staff."
- "Being identified with regular school."
- "Tendency of secondary school to use alternate school as a dumping ground."
- "Restrictions imposed make the program inoperable."
- "Exposure to staff's intolerance of students' weaknesses."
- "Negative feeling of students for administration based on past experience."
- "Lack of understanding and cooperation of school staff giving rise to conflicts."
- "Difficulty in organizing schedules around the school's schedules."
- "Stigmatization, bias, labeling, name calling."
- "Lack of autonomy."
- "Principals' lack of training in special education and of understanding the goals of the program."
- "Unnecessary bureaucratic demands overtax teacher already overwhelmed by the emotional problems of students."
- "Incompatibility of philosophies of staff and administration."

Nine (9%) programs found no disadvantages resulting from this administrative arrangement.

2. Student Characteristics

The Rehabilitation Programs were designed to serve students who had unsuccessful learning experiences in regular education. This was stated by 92 (88%) programs. In addition, 81 (77%) mentioned social problems, emotional disturbance and behavior disorders as the primary characteristics of the student population presently served. Other characteristics were described as: dropouts and potential dropouts 26 (25%), juvenile delinquents 15 (14%), having home problems 10 (9%), and being Native Indians 4 (4%). Additional characteristics were mentioned: students who were two to three years behind in age group, mentally retarded, learning disabled, poorly motivated, discouraged by the regular system, had poor self-concept, and belonged to the lowest socio-economic strata of society. However, some programs emphasized that they do not accept the mentally retarded or learning disabled pupil nor do they provide a learning assistance type of service.

1) Characteristics of students presently enrolled (77/78)

Overlapping characteristics of students enrolled in the Rehabilitation Programs in 1977/78 are shown below by Figure 8.

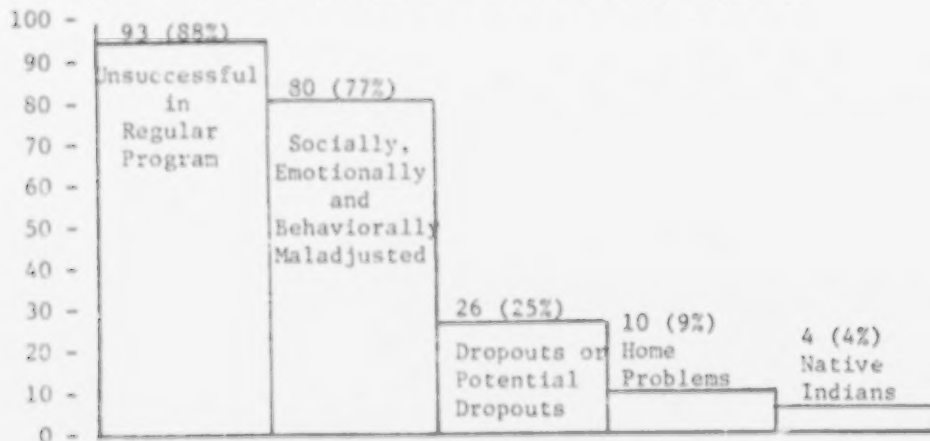


Figure 8. Overlapping characteristics of students enrolled in Rehabilitation Programs in 1977/78.

ii) Acceptability to other programs

The percentage of students who were acceptable to a regular secondary program varied from 20% to 100%. The majority of programs 63 (60%) stated that none of their students were acceptable to the regular secondary program. Correspondingly it was stated that anywhere from 50% to 100% of the students would have refused to enroll in a regular secondary program if this were the only option made available to them.

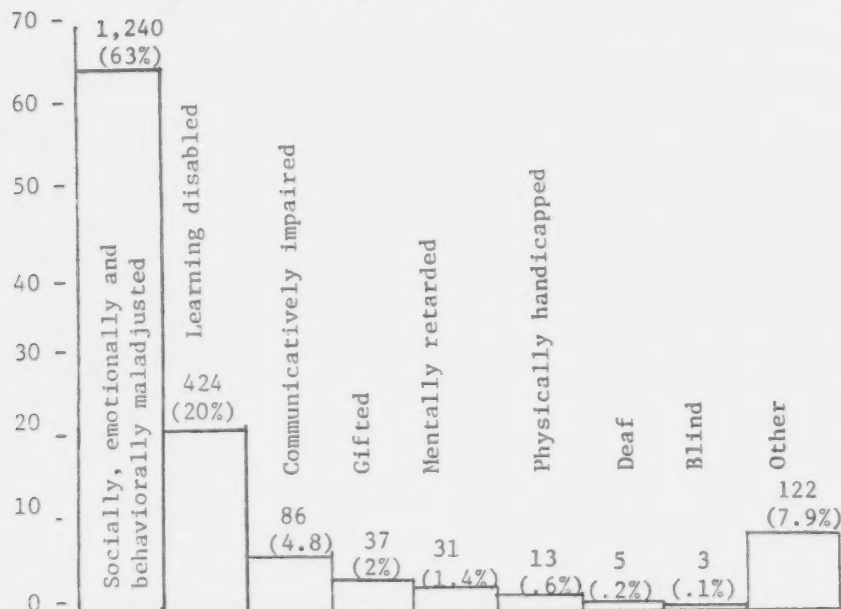
iii) History of special placement

Almost one third, 597 (29%) of these students received special education services prior to enrollment.

iv) Special education categories

The number of students identified for the various special education categories are shown in Figure 9.

The other pupils were labeled as culturally disadvantage, turned-off, overage, truants, from poor home environment, unclassified trouble makes and those who had problems with teachers. During the 1976/77 academic year, 547 (26%) of the pupils in Rehabilitation Programs were on probation.



3. Staff Characteristics

i) Number of teachers

A total of 164 teachers were involved in teaching Rehabilitation Programs. The number of teachers per program (77/78) is shown by Figure 10.

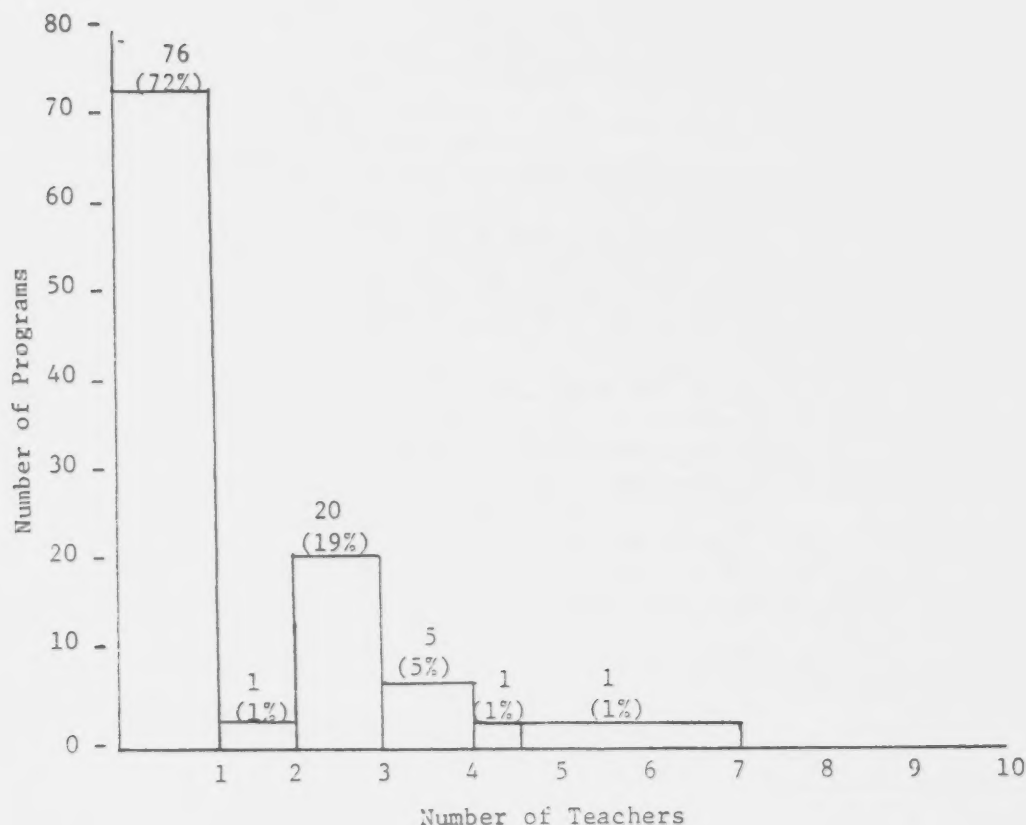


Figure 10. Number of teachers per program.

ii) Number of paid support personnel

The Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of the Attorney-General funded 214 support workers.

Figure 11 gives the number of paid auxiliary support workers per program.

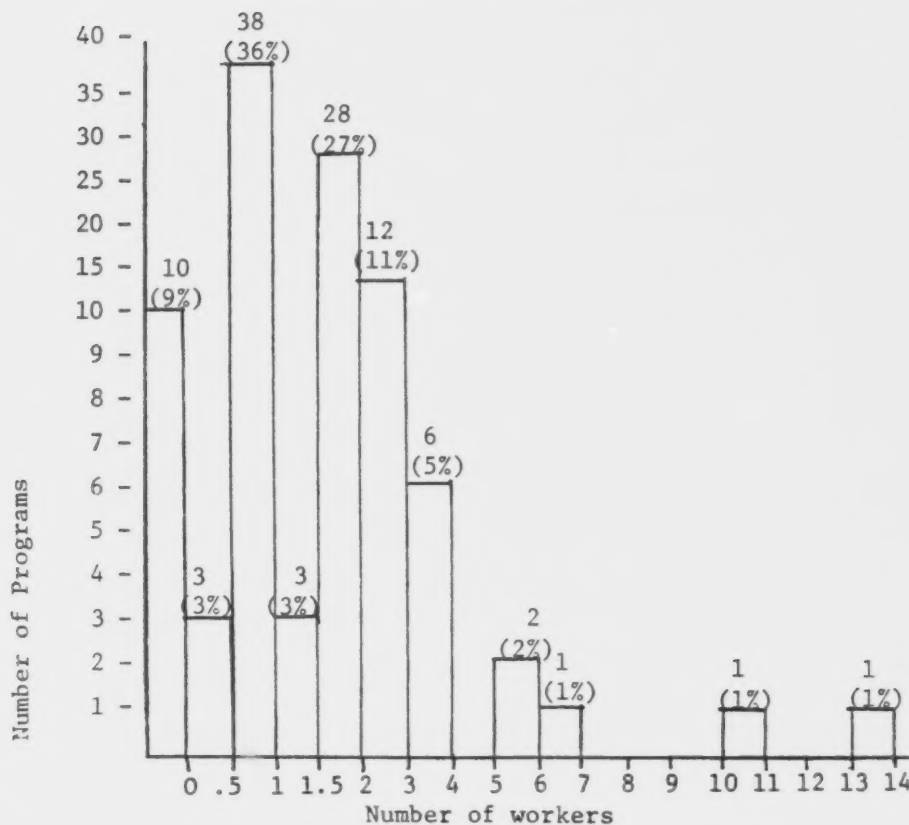


Figure 11. Number of salaried support workers per program. Ten (9%) of the programs had no support workers.

iii) Volunteers

Almost half 46 (44%) of the Rehabilitation Programs reported the use of volunteers. The largest number of volunteers per single program was 48.

iv) Professional preparation of teachers

One hundred and fifty two (94%) teachers held teaching certificates. In addition, 7 (4%) of the teachers held letters of permission to teach. 123 teachers (75%) stated that they had preparation for teaching at the secondary level, 25 teachers indicated professional

training at the graduate level, and 23 (13%) at the undergraduate level.

4. Program Quality

i) Most important contributions of the program

The most important contributions of the Rehabilitation Program not available to the pupils in the regular system were listed as follows:

Individual attention and/or individual programming: 47 (45%), low pupil/teacher ratio: 26 (25%), less formal atmosphere: 8 (5%), opportunity for success: 13 (12%), and flexibility of time schedules and structure: 11 (10%).

Additional contributions were identified as social and emotional upgrading, exposure to work, attention to home and community problems, non-competitive recreational activities, counselling, help in emotional/behavioral/social problems, acceptance of individual differences, and staff expertise.

ii) Appeal to students

- a) The most important attraction of the program for students seeking admission, as perceived by staff, were listed: individual attention: 40 (38%), low pressure: 22 (21%), and friendship: 27 (26%).

The remaining 15% identified these variables as: availability of special help, a place to "hang-out", opportunity for success, opportunity to work at own pace, consistent behavior management, low enrollment, acceptance of the individual as he is, remediation of educational

and social deficits, freedom, field trips, opportunity to start a-fresh, last chance, second chance, escape from regimentation, treatment, short range goals, and work experience.

- b) According to the teachers, the students gave these reasons for selecting the Rehabilitation Program:

It offered them a different environment for continuation of their education: 20 (19%), they disliked teachers and administration in the regular system: 26 (25%), they couldn't make it in the regular school: 25 (24%), they perceived themselves as academic and social failures and hoped for help: 29 (18%), they finished grade 10 faster: 5 (4%).

iii) Strength of the program

The greatest strength of the program listed by educators were: cooperative teaching with staff: 38 (36%), individualization: 28 (27%), low pupil/teacher ratio: 27 (27%), emphasis on personal development: 7 (10%).

Flexibility in organization, time scheduling, and curriculum; personal contact, opportunity for success and re-entry, Native Indians being taught by 50% Native Indian staff; non-threatening environment, and student input into the program were perceived as additional strengths.

iv) Weakness of the program

Comments on program weakness can be divided in various categories.

- a) Weakness related to financial and staffing problems.

- b) Continuing need for specific training and support.
- c) Lack of understanding of the goals of the program.
- d) Student turnover

5. Support Services

i) The help needed to overcome weakness

The respondents specified the following type of assistance required: as funding, staff, inservice training and support services. Other suggestions included: improved work experience program, more resource people, earlier intervention with and remediation of students' problems, easier access to high school facilities and staff, a follow-up program for grade 11 and 12 alternative with strong vocational component, better trained staff, regular contact with the staff of other Rehabilitation Programs.

ii) Availability of professional assistance

a) Source

The respondents indicated a wide variety of support services available to their program. The majority indicated the following combination of services were readily available to them, including: aid available in district, district and Ministry of Human Resources, Ministry of Human Resources, district aid, Ministry of Human Resources and probation, and community services.

iii) Agency involvement

The majority (90%) of the programs named the Ministry of Human Resources as the agency most actively involved with the Rehabilitation Programs. In addition, the following agencies were

mentioned for their active involvement with great frequency:

The local school board (27%), the Ministry of the Attorney-General (21%), Community Services (21%), Public Health (19%), and Manpower (17%).

Agencies cited with less frequency were the RCMP, Fire Department, Family Court, District Forest Service, Syous Club, Department of Indian Affairs, Adult Court, Police, Boys Club, Corrections, Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, UBC and SFU students, Ministry of Labour, United Native Nations, Secretary of State, Parks and Recreation, Workers' Compensation Board, Aid to the Handicapped, Native Development Corporation, local doctors, Drug and Alcohol Abuse Centre, Indian Bands.

iv) District supervisor of special education:

The coordinator/supervisor of special education, as the district person with the expertise and background in teaching exceptional children and who could consequently provide the most support for the program, was reported to be involved: in supervisory capacity (23%), on the screening committee (25%), as a resource person for consultation (39%), as a public relations person and troubleshooter (10%). Three (3%) of the programs reported no liaison at all with the supervisor/coordinator of special education.

v) Communication with fellow teachers

The majority 98 (93%) felt that some regular means of communication with other teachers in Rehabilitation Programs would be very helpful. A publication, workshops and/or conferences were the suggested formats for such communication to take place.

- 21 (20% of the programs reported that they have regular consultations with probation officers, and
- 20 (19%) had probation officers as members of the referral program and/or members of the management committee for the program.

6. Program Effectiveness

1) Evaluation of program effectiveness

Program effectiveness was evaluated by the following single measures by 6 (6%) of the programs:

- 4 (4%) follow-up
- 1 (.9%) regular classroom test
- 1 (.9%) observation

The majority (94%) of the programs used a combination of at least two and the maximum of 4 of the following variables:

- 51 (49%) follow-up
- 43 (41%) attendance
- 43 (41%) change in attitude
- 41 (39%) change in behavior
- 33 (31%) observation
- 23 (22%) standardized tests
- 9 (8%) regular classroom tests

Other measures listed were parental evaluation, decrease in delinquency, willingness to take some regular classes, punctuality, improvement of social, re-entry into regular program, decrease in percentage of welfare recipients, behavior charts, student's self-evaluation, on-going evaluation by staff.

ii) Percentage of successful students

Percentage of students who met the above criteria of success during the 1976/77 school year - Figure 12 shows the results. Ninety-four programs provided data for this question.

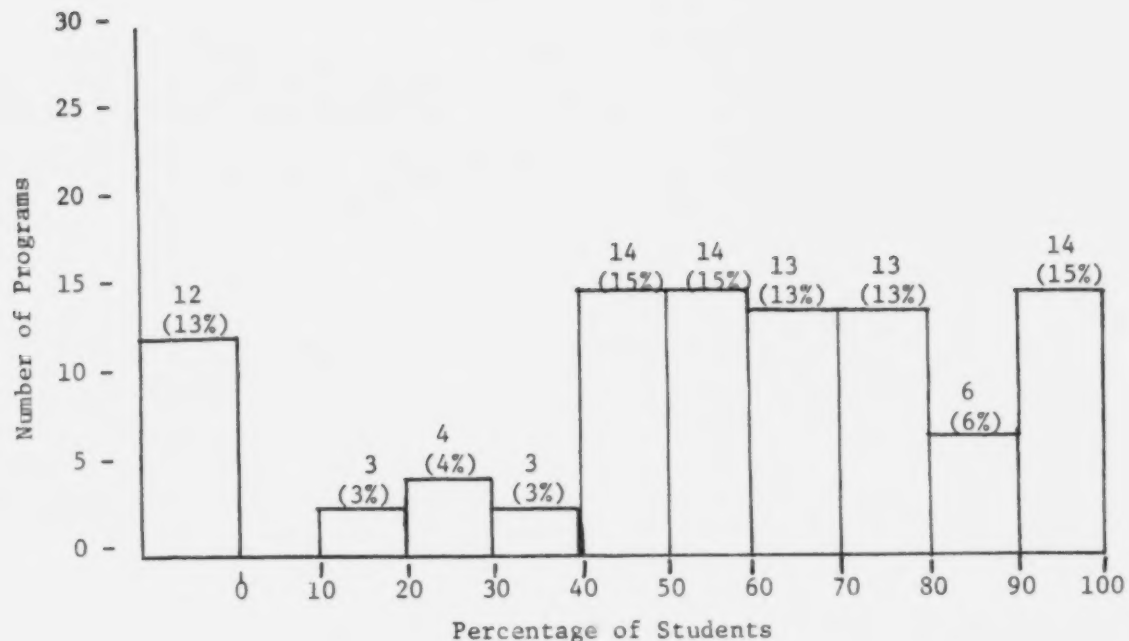


Figure 12. Percentage of students who met criteria for success in 1976/77.

iii) Disposition of students

The table below illustrates the number of students reintegrated into the regular programs, the number of students who left the program and gave specific employment as the reason for leaving, the number of students who dropped out, those who continued and the number of students who achieved grade 10 standing.

Table 1. Disposition of Students 1976/77.

Disposition of Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Re-integrated into the regular program	490	(21%)
Left for employment	410	(19%)
Dropped out	458	(20%)
Acquired grade 10 standing	480	(21%)
Continued the program	410	(19%)

7. Suggested Developments

i) Proposed preparatory experiences for teachers

Practitioners suggested that the best preparation for the task of a Rehabilitation teacher should include a number of these components:

Special education (courses in learning disability, behavior disorder, social and emotional maladjustment, behavior management)	63	(60%)
Practicum experience in Rehabilitation Programs	35	(33%)
Previous teaching experience	33	(31%)
Remedial reading and courses on reading	39	(37%)
Psychology	35	(33%)
Guidance and counselling	45	(43%)
Remedial math	17	(16%)

Since more than one component was suggested, the percentage does not total 100.

Group work, parent training, out of school experience with youth, curriculum development, previous experience with at-risk students, individualization of the curriculum, classroom management, volunteer work with disturbed youth, sense of humor, flexibility, tutoring learning disabled children, communication skills, law, social work, recreation, sports, community education, behavior modification, "street knowledge", adolescent physiology, outdoor living skills, non-verbal communication, supervised experience with emotionally disturbed children, life skills and manual training, were listed as valuable and needed skills for carrying out a program successfully.

ii) Need for additional rehabilitation programs

Teachers identified the need for 187 additional programs in order to serve the need of secondary students in their area where needs could be best met through an educational alternative. The range per district varied from 1 to 10 new Rehabilitation Programs.

The proposed programs would often serve an age group older or younger than the existing program; others would specialize in pre-employment, delinquents, occupational orientation. It was stressed that each secondary school would need an alternative program.

iii) Topics for in-service workshops or conferences

An extensive list of topics was suggested by teachers in Rehabilitation Programs for future in-service.

Discussion

The development of Rehabilitation Programs in the 1970's afforded an educational opportunity for youths whose needs were not adequately met in the traditional secondary setting. In a province where facilities for socially, emotionally and behaviorally maladjusted youths are limited these programs provided a set of supportive learning environments which devote special attention to the student's academic and personal problems. These programs began as a "grassroots" movement to meet a pressing community need, the needs of youths who were "excused" by the regular secondary program or who had voluntarily left the program.

The enthusiasm and dedication of the originators of alternative programs enabled the first programs to survive in spite of financial and social pressures. The initial idealism that ways can be found by trial and error, ways will be found to work successfully with often severely alienated and disturbed youth, was somewhat dampened by the impact of everyday realities and made several programs take another hard look at themselves and shift gears by revising the objectives and corresponding admission criteria. A number of programs have not survived.

The placement of alternative Rehabilitation Programs under the jurisdiction of school districts strengthened the chances for survival and continuity. The rapid expansion within a very short span of time would indicate that the need for an alternative to conventional secondary education was present. The separate housing arrangement from the "mother" school in the case of two-thirds of the programs indicated the distancing from methods and practices which were unsuccessful with these adolescents in the past. The disadvantages reported in a number of instances. The earlier

report on Rehabilitation Programs, (Walsh, 1974), noted: "articulation with the regular school system appears to be at a minimum. The link between the schools and these programs was anything but an umbilical cord - no nourishment flowed down it." In general, the statements four years later appeared to be the same with regard to the differences, lack of understanding, lack of involvement of administration and staff in the life of the alternative program. The enrollment figure 1,962 formed .9% of the total enrollment of secondary school students for 1977. This was a small percentage. The existing waiting list indicated that there are many more youths who find themselves in inappropriate educational environments whether in the regular school or on the street.

The majority of Rehabilitation Programs were designed for a small group of students, 11-20, which helped to maintain an intimate, personal ambient between students and staff.

The underlying philosophy of the Rehabilitation Programs seemed to show a historical relationship to the street academy movement (Baines and Young, 1971), the storefront centres for urban dropout youth in the 1960's in the United States. The basic belief in the right for education for each individual regardless of his deviance from the norm, in the ability of the staff to find ways and means to meet individualized needs and to equip the child more adequately for adult life are probably easier stated than practised as indicated by the dropout rate (20%).

The objectives of the programs varied, but in general there was common agreement on the following goals: (1) the completion of grade 10 equivalency and a concomitant remediation of academic deficits and upgrading in basic skill areas, (2) introduction to work experience

skills through cooperation with the community, (3) the improvement of social skills, (4) reintegration to the regular program, and (5) improvement of "self-concept". The time scheduling reflected the variation in prioritization of objectives; some programs spent 100% of their time on academic upgrading, two-thirds (69%) allocated more than 50% of program time for upgrading, which left one-third of the programs with 0-50% of their time scheduled for remediation in the basic skill areas. In general the largest block of time allocated was for academic upgrading. Up to 25% of the program time is allocated by 83% of the programs for recreational activities, 60% for social skill training, and 53% for vocational training.

While recreational training was not one of the main objectives of the program, the amount of time allocated for it would indicate that it was considered more important by more program designers than, for example, vocational training. One might argue that recreational activities provide excellent opportunity for social skill training, but the separate time allocation of 25% of the time for social skill training would for some programs increase this activity up to 50% leaving no room for the second major goal of vocational training.

Admitting procedures, which originally featured self admittance to programs, became more formalized over the years and referral by a committee, agency or a school counsellor became the accepted route. With the exception of a small group of programs (4%) for Native Indian youth with social, emotional and behavior maladjustment who have difficulty in the regular program.

The condition of being a dropout or a potential dropout was

mentioned a part of the admission criteria by 24% of the programs and being delinquent or a potential delinquent by 11% of the programs. While the condition of being a dropout or potential dropout was initially a prime requirement for admittance, its significance lessened over the years, probably, in part, because the potential dropout might have been channeled to an alternative program at an earlier stage to prevent the actual dropping-out of the educational system.

Some programs redefined themselves as serving one particular student population: delinquents, drug abusers, older or younger age groups. Some programs have "excused" severely maladjusted students, others no longer accept students with low mental ability. Even with support and guidance from the Ministry of Education, a sorting out and a shifting of priorities has occurred. Some programs emphasized re-entry to regular programs, while others seek alternatives to re-entry, such as employment.

Budgetary difficulties were mentioned by two-thirds of the programs. Insufficient funds for transportation, recreation and extra staff were the most frequently mentioned problems, some of which could probably be solved within the possibilities of the budget of the secondary school.

The main advantage of being administratively assigned to a secondary school was to have access to material and personnel resources and opportunity for reintegration. The greatest disadvantages were the loss of autonomy and lack of understanding of the aims and methods of the Rehabilitation Program. After almost four years of existence under the administrative jurisdiction of a host secondary school, the opportunity for airing differences, discussion of program procedures,

seeking help from staff, active involvement in staff meetings must have arisen. One could assume that the overwhelming involvement in the program and the emphasis on the differences rather than the similarities between the programs have, perhaps, prevented program staff from making a strong impact on the staff of the host secondary school. Further, one may speculate that members who were least likely to agree with the methods used by conventional secondary schools and consequently were not the most popular members of the staff, have volunteered for teaching in Rehabilitation Programs and felt no compulsion of challenging further their former colleagues. It is also frequently mentioned in the history of special education programs that once the problem children were out of sight (usually beside the boiler room) they were conveniently forgotten.

Teaching the large percentage of socially, emotionally and behaviorally maladjusted students who are not acceptable to the conventional secondary programs require special skills and specialized training. While no uniform definition of socially, emotionally and behavioral maladjustment was offered, or differentiation made between the multiple descriptions, one can assume that the children with the most or greatest problems in every district find themselves in the alternative programs.

Ramsey and Longstreth (1977) offered the following distinction between social maladjustment and emotional disturbance:

Social Maladjustment	Emotional Disturbance
1. defined socially and legally	1. defined psychologically
2. skewed towards low income sector	2. spreads across the economic spectrum
3. skewed towards physical acting out and coarse social habits	3. includes all points between hyperoppressiveness and extremely withdrawn behavior
4. easily identified	

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 5. responds to short-term methods | 4. difficult to identify |
| 6. draws undue attention | 5. frequently tied to long-term corrective process |
| | 6. often escapes attention |

without discussing the merits of the distinction made between these two overlapping categories, it would appear that many of the Rehabilitation programs cater to the socially maladjusted youth with whom the chances of short-term intervention appears to be greater and more successful than perhaps with the emotionally disturbed youth. Regardless the distinction, adequate and well trained staff were an absolute necessity (Ramsey and Longstreth, 1977) and teachers and administrators throughout the system need ongoing training in managing, identifying and teaching these adolescents.

The majority of the programs were managed by one teacher and one of two child care workers with or without additional volunteers. Less than one-third of the teachers had previous training in special education, or counselling or reading. Organized continuous in-service was not part of the support service of these programs. While enthusiasm, dedication, willingness to succeed were strong motivating attributes in these programs, to realize the most important contribution of the program, namely individual attention and/or individual programming, opportunity for success and the basic objectives require specialized skills in teaching, organization and a greater level of proficiency than that of teaching the student who could cope with the conventional program.

The teachers realistically appraised their need for specific training and support when faced continuously with the emotional, social and behavioral problems of their students.

Two-thirds of the programs indicated that professional assistance was available in the district and the majority (90%) named the Ministry of Human Resources as the agency most actively involved with the Rehabilitation Programs with only 37% listing the local school board as being actively involved.

In 39% of the programs the supervisor or coordinator of special education was identified as a resource person who was involved to some degree in 97% of the programs. Probation officers showed active involvement with 39% of the programs.

The need for communication with fellow teachers in Rehabilitation programs was stressed.

Measures evaluating program effectiveness varied from the single measures of follow-up, regular classroom tests and observation to multiple measures of follow-up, attendance and change in attitude and behavior.

If we take 50% as a cut-off point, 36% of the students during 1976/77 did not meet the criteria for success according to the measures listed for program evaluation. The dropout rate of 20% would indicate that not all students who did not succeed left the program but will continue in the program. The suggestions for conference, in-service, workshop topics clearly indicate the teachers' need for professional assistance.

A report on alternative education (Balsam, 1974) in New York City identified certain essential components of viable and effective programs. These elements, incorporated in a wide variety of alternative programs in New York City, were enumerated as:

- a small group organization which is significantly different from the conventional school program

- an identity separate from the mainstream high school, either through housing in a different building or through location in a distinct area of school building
- close informal relationship between students and their teachers and counsellors
- involvement of the students in curriculum development, in policy making and in the administration of the alternative program
- a motivational program that will help students develop a positive self image, increase their awareness of career options and raise their aspirational goals
- individualized instruction based on students' varying abilities and needs and remediation to upgrade their skills in reading and math
- the means for a student to earn a high school diploma or a New York State Equivalency Diploma

Many of these components are found in the Rehabilitation Programs in British Columbia.

In summary, alternative education programs were timely and needed developments in the schools of British Columbia to deal with problems of youths who could be informally regarded as the system's "worst" or "most difficult" students. Reasonable rationale for the predominance of problem behavior at the junior high school or grade 8-9 level can be easily provided by a combination of factors:

- there are many students who do not want to be at school;
- emotional turmoil of passing through adolescence;
- change from the smaller, more intimate environment of elementary school to a less personal, large secondary school;
- accumulated frustration due to failure and partial or total alienation from the goals of the school, etc.

But this explanation should not divert efforts from developing and implementing procedures for earlier identification and effective intervention with academic, social, emotional and behavioral problems. Early educational intervention at a more optimum point in the student's developmental sequence might prevent the deterioration of behavior to such an extent that Rehabilitation Programs find it impossible to deal with certain students in spite of their willingness to accommodate and tolerate deviant divergent behaviors. The training of teachers in regular programs to gain competencies in coping with and changing disruptive behavior needs to be reemphasized.

A basic question remains - can the majority of mental health problems of our adolescents be "solved" by professionally inadequately prepared personnel, who try to overcome this shortcoming with dedication, enthusiasm and strong motivation, or is there an additional need for more specialized services for the severely disturbed adolescents?

In our opinion we need both. Teachers in these programs can be more adequately prepared, existing mental health personnel could be more actively involved in this preparation and in addition community facilities for severely disturbed adolescents need to be developed.

The influence of Rehabilitation Programs on conventional secondary schools could be a beneficial one, once both groups of teachers achieve a degree of free flowing, straight forward communication, greater acceptance of philosophy and methods of the Rehabilitation Programs, and greater degree of involvement of "regular" teachers in the alternative program.

One other important issue is to improve the quality of these programs by rethinking and of rerationalizing the goals and evaluation program effectiveness.

Hickey, 1972, stated four specific purposes for evaluation of alternative programs:

1. for the purpose of internal self-improvement which in turn relates to the ongoing planning process;
2. for the purpose of establishing credibility of the alternate program;
3. to identify the educational strategies that work and those that do not work;
4. for evaluating realistically where the program stands without which evaluation of student progress is difficult.

In order to answer the question of how well do alternative programs help meet the needs of secondary students in this province, we need to define student needs specifically and evaluate what type of alternative programs do meet those specific needs. Program coordinators need to state their objectives more precisely in order to answer basic questions such as, for example,

- do students show 60% improvement in attendance as compared with their last public school record?;
- do students show at least 50% improvement in every subject area on test achievement?;
- do students acquire 40% or more high school credits towards graduation than during the previous academic year?;
- do students acquire 50% improvement of vocational skills?.

Similar questions need to be raised in the area of each objective. If the program states improvement of "self-image" and in social skills as objectives then the attainment of these objectives have to be measured.

A program with clearly defined objective and demonstrated evidence of reaching its objectives might communicate better and attain the credibility with staffs of secondary schools and the community in general.

It would be fallacious to pretend that inadequate Rehabilitation

Programs with often inexperienced teachers will solve the problems of youths with long lasting problems of various degrees of seriousness. Rehabilitation Programs were cast upon the educational scene in this province to alleviate often overwhelming social problems. Teacher skill, enthusiasm and experience are necessary but insufficient requirements to deal successfully with the severely disturbed or maladjusted youths. The cooperation and involvement of other existing social agencies is often necessary to help youths to make a successful adjustment. Close cooperation at the ministerial level involving Education, Human Resources, Health and the Attorney General's Department as well as other agencies at the local level will be required to deal with the various aspects of youth problems both at the program maintenance and staff preparatory level.



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